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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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In the absence of Mr. Dinu (Romania), Ms. Rotheiser (Austria), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/46/327 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/47/7/Add.1 and A/47/358; A/C.5/47/2 and Corr.1 and A/C.5/47/16; A/C.5/46/CRP.1)

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1. Mr. CHUINKAM (Cameroon) said that he attached great importance to programme performance reports as a means of ascertaining whether the scarce resources of the United Nations had been judiciously spent. Unfortunately, the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/47/159 and Add.1) fell short of expectations in that it failed to provide an analytical picture of programme performance during 1990-1991, particularly with regard to changes affecting programme implementation. In that regard, he agreed with the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) that all activities designated high priority should be implemented.

2. He welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to make the medium-term plan more concise, in line with the provisions of resolution 45/253, and was pleased that it had incorporated into the proposed revisions the mandates derived from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio, the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the first phase of the restructuring process. However, he regretted that only a limited number of the revised programmes had been reviewed by the relevant intergovernmental bodies and therefore fully supported the recommendation of CPC that ways should be found to improve the consideration of the plan and the revisions to the plan by those bodies.

3. Turning to specific programme revisions, he supported the recommendation of CPC that in programme 30 (Regional cooperation for development in Africa) high priority should also be accorded to subprogramme 9 (Women in development), since women in Africa were not only responsible for the bulk of agricultural production, but had also played an effective role in population control, health care and education and were therefore vital to the successful implementation of the programme.

4. While he welcomed the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, he was concerned that it might meet the same fate as its predecessor, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic

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Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD), under which Africa had met its commitments but the international community had failed to do so. He therefore supported the recommendations of CPC that the Secretary-General should launch the System-wide Plan of Action and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s as soon as possible, that the priorities of the Plan should be used as guidelines for United Nations activities related to African development, that the Plan should be monitored and updated in the framework of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force for African Economic Recovery and Development, and that the Secretary-General should play a leading role in its implementation. He welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to create a unit for Africa within the Department of Economic and Social Development and urged that it be given adequate financial and human resources.

5. With regard to programme 38 (Public information), he stressed that United Nations information centres played a vital role in enhancing awareness of the Organization's activities, thereby helping Member States to justify their expenditure on the United Nations in the eyes of public opinion, particularly in the developing countries where resources were so scarce. The centres could also help to provide the Secretary-General with the information he needed to implement the preventive diplomacy measures set out in his report entitled "An Agenda for Peace". He therefore deplored the fact that at present resources were concentrated on a few centres in developed countries and agreed with those members of CPC who had suggested that resources should be redeployed to strengthen centres in the developing countries and countries in transition, in order to comply with the provisions of resolution 46/73 B.

6. Mr. BIDNYI (Russian Federation) said his delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's expectation that a fundamental renewal of the United Nations would be complete by the time of the Organization's fiftieth anniversary (A/47/1, para. 7). The road to genuine renewal, however, lay not only through de-ideologization and de-politicization but also through the rationalization and coordination of the work of the United Nations in close conjunction with Member States. While there was still scope for reform in accordance with the recommendations of the Group of 18, the new mandates entrusted to the Organization made additional measures necessary beyond that context.

7. The satisfactory results of the first stage of restructuring, carried out in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/232, were due in large part to the decisive action of the Secretary-General very shortly after taking office. Noting that the international community increasingly viewed reforms as an ongoing process which responded flexibly to the changing situation at the United Nations and throughout the world, his delegation sincerely hoped that the Secretary-General would continue to be guided by that understanding. The essential objective of restructuring must be to create a compact and effective executive apparatus which would both permit appropriate redistribution of human and financial resources when obsolete and marginal programmes were abolished and prevent duplication. His delegation, which

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fully subscribed to the view that redistribution of resources among programmes and budget sections was not only possible but desirable, believed that such a process was of major importance under conditions of zero budget growth. Considerable use could be made in that connection of the flexibility allowed to the Secretary-General with regard to personnel policies, with a view to ensuring the optimum utilization of human resources.

8. To ensure a more effective United Nations, structural reform must be accompanied by major changes in the Organization's programme activities and a clear definition of priorities, and it would be both short-sighted and wasteful to neglect the current opportunities for change. In that context, it was time for a fresh look at the medium-term plan and a decision as to the extent to which the plan constituted a useful policy document which could both adapt to constantly changing mandates and permit fundamental renewal of the Organization.

9. There was ample scope for rationalization of the Organization's activities in the economic and social spheres, including a more rational distribution of work between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions and the avoidance of duplication between the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly through the removal of certain items from the latter's agenda. Noting the interesting proposals made in that regard at the meetings of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group, his delegation hoped that agreement would be reached on a streamlining of both intergovernmental and Secretariat structures in those spheres.

10. Restructuring of the Secretariat should run in parallel with improved coordination of activities throughout the United Nations system based on an open, honest and constructive dialogue among Member States, the Secretariat, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and the Secretary-General in his capacity as its Chairman, as well as on close linkage between the technical and substantive aspects of such coordination. Work should be distributed among different agencies in such a way as to avoid duplication and to ensure the best possible use of all the system's resources, and the restructuring initiated in New York should gradually extend to all other bodies. In view of its predominant role in ensuring such coordination, the mandate, methods of work and decision-making process of ACC should perhaps be reviewed. In that connection, his delegation awaited with interest the results of the study mentioned in paragraph 38 of document A/47/1.

11. The Secretary-General's first efforts to rationalize United Nations structures at the field level, including the proposal for unified representation in individual countries, deserved endorsement. His delegation also looked forward to joining in discussions of the interesting proposal regarding the creation of a system-wide inspector-general's office to improve internal auditing and financial control.

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12. Recognizing the need for well-trained managerial staff, his delegation believed that the Secretariat's proposals for managerial training and increased accountability were in full accordance with the recommendations of CPC in that regard. It also considered the Secretary-General's proposal for a new form of budget presentation to be a further useful step towards improvement and simplification of the budget methodology. In conclusion, it endorsed the Secretary-General's revised estimates for 1992-1993.

13. Mr. OSELLA (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that he had taken note of the figure of $2,410 million for the preliminary estimate for the biennium 1994-1995, given by the Secretary-General in his report (A/47/358). In view of the preliminary and indicative nature of that figure, which might be adjusted once the real activities for the coming biennium had been defined, the countries of the Rio Group wished to reserve their position on the size of the budget for 1994-1995 until full details of its content were available. He also noted the proposed growth rate of 0.2 per cent, which was in line with the policies for budget austerity and stability advocated by the Member States. He welcomed the improvements in the methodology for determining budgetary growth rates but felt that the procedures for calculating variations between successive budgets could be further simplified.

14. Although transparency and discipline in the use of resources were vital, budgetary rigour should not be confused with inflexibility. The budget should be seen as an administrative instrument to facilitate the functioning of the United Nations and budget criteria should be subordinate to the Organization's operational needs and not vice versa. It would be unacceptable to seek to use specific budget criteria as a condition to oblige Member States to meet their financial obligations.

15. The overall priorities of the United Nations were defined in the medium-term plan adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 45/253. Until the Member States decided specifically to modify those priorities, they should remain the only valid ones and the programme budget should be adapted to them. However, in paragraph 12 of his report, the Secretary-General referred to increases in resources for four areas of activity which did not strictly correspond to the priorities set in the medium-term plan. He hoped that the reasons for that anomaly would be explained when the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 was presented in detail.

16. Although he agreed with the Secretary-General that peace and security were closely linked to economic and social development, he felt that both should be seen as objectives in their own right, since social progress and improved living standards were legitimate aspirations and rights of all peoples.

17. Recent experience had shown that the contingency fund was operating in a satisfactory manner and he therefore agreed with the Secretary-General that there were no obvious reasons to change the level of the fund, which currently stood at 0.75 per cent of overall resources.

18. Mr. WU Gang (China), speaking on agenda items 103 and 104, said that his delegation had noted the structural adjustments which had been introduced by the Secretary-General earlier in the year and approved by the General Assembly in resolution 46/232. That resolution had also called on the Secretary-General to submit a report on the programmatic impact of the changes, reflecting the concern of Member States that restructuring should enhance the efficiency of the Organization by enabling it to respond effectively to the requirements of programme activities, rather than being merely a cost-cutting exercise. The proposals for the consolidation of existing units and the reduction in high-level posts should therefore be seen as an effort to streamline decision-making, curb bureaucracy and eliminate duplication, not as measures to weaken the functioning of certain departments or units.

19. As both CPC and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) had pointed out, the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/2) dealt only with the financial implications of the restructuring exercise and failed to provide an analysis of their programmatic impact, making it difficult to assess the reliability of the revised estimates. He trusted that the Secretary-General would provide further information on the matter. He also hoped that restructuring would enhance work on the economic and social development of developing countries, which was increasingly important in the post-cold-war era.

20. He stressed that reform should continue to be carried out on the basis of full and extensive consultation with Member States and in accordance with the principles which they had advocated for many years, namely that the aim of reform should be to improve the administrative and financial efficiency of the Organization and strengthen its unique role in international affairs, and that it should not adversely affect the implementation of programme activities or jeopardize the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts.

21. The Secretary-General had stressed that efficient use of human resources and the abiity to respond rapidly to changing needs required a certain degree of flexibility in human resources management. However, his delegation felt that the establishment of posts should be determined by the actual workload of the various units; it was unacceptable constantly to increase staff in certain units without providing the General Assembly with information concerning post requirements. He found it difficult to understand why as many as 74 posts had been identified for redeployment for only a one-year period following the adoption of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, since it cast doubt on the seriousness of the whole budgetary process. He agreed with CPC that flexibility in the treatment of vacancies must be examined in the context of the existing financial rules and regulations. He hoped that the Secretary-General would provide the information requested by ACABQ in order to facilitate consideration of the issue. He also agreed with the arrangements proposed by the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/47/7 for the 13 posts in UNCTAD.

22. Mr. FAZLE MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that in some cases the Secretariat had redeployed posts without ascertaining the views of the Member States directly affected. While the aim of the restructuring exercise was to ensure the efficient operation of the system, it was vital that it should not affect programme areas, especially in the economic and social fields, which were of particular importance for developing countries.

23. He would appreciate information concerning the departments of origin of the 22 redeployed posts shown in the table in paragraph 8 of document A/47/7/Add.1. Measures to enhance efficiency should seek to ensure that staffing increases in one sector did not deplete other sectors. The aim was not to eliminate posts but to ensure a more logical distribution of the workload. Problems in programme implementation should not be solved by the elimination of the department concerned; on the contrary, departments engaged in activities beneficial to Member States should be strengthened and expanded as part of a consolidated plan focusing on every aspect of the system. The 7 per cent vacancy rate referred to in the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/47/2, para. 17) could be used for the redeployment of staff without any impact on the budget.

24. While his delegation appreciated the constraints faced by the Secretary-General in his efforts to adjust to current requirements, it felt that the existing machinery was preferable, and that the current procedure governing transfers of posts, in accordance with financial regulation 4.5 and financial rule 104.4, should be retained. The General Assembly should be the final arbiter in that regard, due account being taken of intergovernmental concerns.

25. The magnitude of the changes involved in the restructuring exercise made it necessary for them not only to be communicated to the General Assembly and the Advisory Committee, but also to be subjected to detailed examination. The Secretary-General needed more flexibility in managing the Organization's financial resources, but it was essential that any changes proposed should be subjected to intergovernmental scrutiny before they were adopted.

26. In conclusion, he emphasized that any activity related to the restructuring must be in line with the Charter and its principles. That was the only way in which the Organization could play its proper role of maintaining peace and promoting progress and prosperity.

27. Mr. SIAKALENGE (Zambia) said that his delegation supported the conclusions and recommendations of CPC and the Advisory Committee, as well as certain aspects of the Secretary-General's proposals in regard to the items under consideration. He wished to stress, however, that the principal aim of the review was to identify measures and mechanisms that would enhance the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the Organization and he would urge the Secretary-General to ensure that political, economic and social issues were not sacrificed to peace and security matters.

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28. The restructuring process had affected not only major programmes and activities in the political, economic and social fields but also Secretariat support structures and a number of staff members. His delegation welcomed the reduction in the number of senior officials reporting to the Secretary-General through the regrouping of some major functions. The merging of some functions could, however, damage certain programmes, including some of particular interest to developing countries. The suggestion regarding the establishment of a post of inspector-general at the Under-Secretary-General level confirmed his delegation's suspicion that the sequence of the reforms had not been properly thought out. There seemed to be little merit in abolishing posts at the Under-Secretary-General level only to recommend the establishment of new ones shortly thereafter.

29. It was important for the Secretariat to specify both the programmatic and the financial implications of the reform process and to provide an assurance that the process would not negatively affect programmes critical to the development of developing countries. In essence, his delegation was calling upon the Secretariat and Member States to ensure that there was no deliberate effort during the reform process to erode the United Nations Charter.

30. As far as flexibility in the management of staff resources was concerned, his delegation would prefer any major constraints in legislative and administrative structures first to be identified by the Fifth Committee, which could then consider how mechanisms could be designed to address them.

31. Noting that the final appropriation for the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 would be determined by the Fifth Committee in the light of the revised estimates submitted by the Secretary-General, he said that, while the estimates reflected the financial implications of decisions adopted by certain intergovernmental bodies, the programmatic implications were given less emphasis. Activities mandated by the General Assembly should not be changed or altered by the Secretariat without the Assembly's explicit authorization.

32. It appeared that the members of CPC and of the Fifth Committee had received the Secretary-General's report on the restructuring process with mixed feelings. With regard to the suppression, creation and redeployment of posts, his delegation was well known to disapprove of practices at variance with the regulations and rules governing programme planning. He stressed the importance of priority-setting as an integral part of the planning, programming and budgeting process and said that his delegation had taken note of the steps taken by the Secretary-General to enhance general awareness of the Organization's budgetary process and improve the programmatic content of the budget.

33. Mr. LORET (Cuba) said that it was essential to accept the programme planning rule that programmes, subprogrammes and programme elements must be based on intergovernmental mandates officially handed down by legislative bodies through relevant resolutions and decisions. Secretariat proposals should not be used as legislative mandates. The Secretary-General was entitled to make the proposals he regarded as necessary, as part of his mandate under the Charter, but those proposals should be submitted to the appropriate intergovernmental bodies, not to the technical bodies responsible for planning - CPC and the Fifth Committee. Unfortunately, in some cases, the proposals had been neither presented to nor accepted by the appropriate intergovernmental bodies. They should therefore be postponed until those bodies had had an opportunity to discharge their responsibilities. It was particularly disturbing that the Secretariat had not taken steps to advise the other Main Committees to include the consideration of proposals for revision that came within their respective mandates in their work programmes. He wondered whether that failure was due to incompetence or to an implicit desire to avoid involving the specialized intergovernmental bodies.

34. In an unprecedented step, the traditional practice of allowing observers to participate actively in the decision-making process in CPC had been discontinued. If the recommendations of CPC were to be helpful to the Fifth Committee, the necessary steps should be taken to restore a practice which had helped to secure consensus in the Fifth Committee.

35. He endorsed the comments made by previous speakers on the need to simplify the format of the medium-term plan and the procedures for its revision. He believed, however, that the current system already provided the means of bringing about such a simplification. What was needed was a further refinement of the planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluating arrangements. In that connection, he welcomed the proposal regarding the holding of a technical seminar on programme planning, whether or not it would result in additional cost to the Organization.

36. Turning to the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (A/47/6), he said that a new and politically very sensitive concept, which had been neither defined nor endorsed by the General Assembly, had been introduced into the titles of programme 1 and subprogramme 1, as well as into the structure, priorities and narrative of that subprogramme. He referred to the term "preventive diplomacy", which occurred also in the narrative of other programmes. Some Member States had sought to give legitimacy to certain political concepts through the so-called evolutionary interpretation of the Charter. Some of those concepts appeared in the report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277-S/24111). In paragraph 1.10 of subprogramme 1, an attempt was made to use that document as a legislative mandate. However, as a number of delegations had pointed out, both in the Fifth Committee and in CPC, the Secretary-General's proposals were currently under consideration by the General Assembly and could not therefore constitute a legislative mandate at present. In various passages of the programme narrative, particularly in subprogramme 3, reference was made to "threats to peace", "conflict areas",

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"disputes" and "developments related to peace and security" without the addition of the word "international". He would like an assurance from the Secretariat that that was an involuntary omission, otherwise he would require an explanation from the representative of the Secretary-General.

37. With regard to programme 2, "Political and Security Council affairs", the programme's title was not in accordance with its content, since the General Assembly, through the First Committee, also dealt with matters relating to international peace and security.

38. The proposed amendments to programme 4, "Special political questions, trusteeship and decolonization", contradicted the statement (A/47/6 (Prog. 4), para. 3) that the revisions did not reflect a fundamental change in the mandate, orientation and strategy of the programme. The proposal for the inclusion of a new subprogramme 4, entitled "Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections", was unacceptable as it did not fall within the general orientation of the programme. In connection with the reference to General Assembly resolution 46/137 as the legislative mandate, he drew attention to the omission of any reference to resolution 46/130, which was equally relevant as a legislative mandate - an omission that required an explanation from the Secretariat - and to the fact that the topic formed an integral part of programme 35 and should appear there. Moreover, there was no legislative authority for the statement in paragraph 4.39 that the functions of the Electoral Assistance Unit would be to "assist Member States in the holding and verificaton of elections as a mechanism to promote peacemaking, further the enhancement of human rights and provide development assistance". The Secretariat should explain the origin of that condition for the provision of development assistance. Lastly, the new orientation proposed for subprogramme 2 was linked to previous proposals by certain Member States which the Secretary-General had recapitulated in "An Agenda for Peace". The final decision on the subprogramme should be taken in the light of the General Assembly's ultimate decision in that connection.

39. Pending the receipt of the views of the Fourth Committee on the content of programme 6, "Elimination of apartheid", he wished to draw attention to the proposed new paragraph 6.36, which included a reference to consensus resolutions that was unacceptable and would constitute a very dangerous precedent. All resolutions, whether adopted by consensus or not, provided the legislative mandate for the medium-term plan.

40. With regard to programme 38, "Public information", the mandate of the Department of Public Information and, in particular, of the information centres, should be maintained. The proposal that the responsibilities of the former Office for Research and the Collection of Information should be transferred to the Department of Public Information was unacceptable.

(Mr. Loret, Cuba)

41. The Committee should await the results of the discussions and negotiations in the other Main Committees, without which it could not take decisions on programmes which were of a political nature or were outside its own terms of reference.

42. Mr. BARIMANI (Islamic Republic of Iran), commenting on the follow-up report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the Management Advisory Service (A/46/327), said that every organization was constantly challenged to manage its human resources efficiently and to preserve and enhance the coherence of its policy with regard to organizational structure, working environment and procedural improvements. Effective internal management machinery could help to realize those objectives.

43. An in-house management consulting group had existed in the United Nations since 1968. Acting on the advice of the Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General had reconstituted that group as the Administrative Management Service in 1969; it had been given the immediate task of surveying manpower utilization in the Secretariat and its recommendations, once accepted by the Secretary-General, were expected to be implemented by the responsible Secretariat officials. However, as the report pointed out, after various reorganizations, the impact of what was now called the Management Advisory Service had grown negligible and a further reorientation of its activities and organizational arrangements seemed to be called for. His delegation therefore welcomed the report and agreed in principle with its findings and recommendations. It recognized the need for a strong internal management consulting service which could be used to improve management structures, streamline systems and procedures, help to achieve cost efficiency and enhance the Organization's overall effectiveness. There was a greater need than ever for a more independent management mechanism, capable of sustaining the evolving functions of the United Nations in the most effective manner. The report emphasized that point, and also recommended that greater use should be made of modern practices and techniques in order to improve overall management capacity.

44. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that restructuring was not an end in itself. The purpose of the exercise was to improve the delivery of mandated programmes in the most cost-effective manner. It was important to determine whether the reforms undertaken so far had been effective.

45. There had been a regrettable tendency to equate reform or restructuring with staff reductions, in particular the elimination of high-level posts. The welfare and morale of international civil servants had not been given due attention by Member States. If any organization was to perform efficiently, its staff must be well motivated, not only by the cause they served but also by their conditions of service. Since 1986, the Secretariat staff had laboured under a constant fear of their posts being abolished. Such an atmosphere was not conducive to effective performance.

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

46. In some instances, improved programme delivery might entail staff reductions or the consolidation of Secretariat units. There might also be a need to create new positions or structures when new activities were undertaken. Whatever the case, depending on the challenges facing the Organization, Member States needed to determine the resources available and the size and quality of the staff needed.

47. In the context of the implementation of resolution 41/213, the General Assembly had requested analytical reports showing how restructuring was proceeding and whether efficiency was being enhanced. The Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session (A/45/226) had stated that it was impossible at that time to identify more high-level posts for further reductions without an adverse impact on programmes. His delegation had been sympathetic to that position. At its forty-sixth session, however, the General Assembly had accepted new proposals by the Secretary-General for further reductions in high-level posts. His delegation had been somewhat surprised that, despite increasing mandates, it had been possible to make more reductions. Despite its misgivings, however, it had not challenged the Secretary-General's proposals. Many Member States, especially the developing countries, had been apprehensive about the adverse impact of the changes on programme delivery and the possibility that they might alter priorities already agreed upon. For that reason, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit a report not only on the financial implications of organizational changes but on their impact on mandated programmes.

48. While the latest report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/2) indicated the financial implications of the changes initiated, it failed to respond to the General Assembly's request for information on their programmatic impact. His delegation shared the concern expressed by both CPC and the Advisory Committee regarding the lack of that information.

49. The changes that had been initiated included the downgrading of the Department of Conference Services. His delegation hoped that there was no intention to diminish the importance attached to conference servicing, which played a critical role in facilitating dialogue between Member States. Adequate conference servicing and documentation were essential to multilateral diplomacy. Deep cuts in that area could frustrate endeavours to harmonize international action.

50. In the course of the debate on the pattern of conferences, a number of speakers had complained of intergovernmental bodies being handicapped by delays in the issuance of documents. His delegation agreed that such delays were unfortunate. The introduction of technological innovations had promised to be a way out of that difficulty but did not seem to have enhanced conference servicing. It might be time to review the situation.

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

51. As part of its response to the financial crisis, the General Assembly had agreed that a number of intergovernmental bodies should not have summary records. The biennialization and triennialization of meetings had also become a common feature. While such measures might be understandable in view of the financial crisis, the Organization should not make a virtue of necessity. The curtailment of documentation and the inability to provide summary records could not enhance efficiency in the conduct of business. The situation with regard to conference services should therefore be reviewed and remedial action taken as soon as the financial situation permitted. Within its mandate, the Committee on Conferences had performed well. However, its role vis-à-vis other Committees was that of a facilitator and not a policeman. His delegation would resist any moves to change its mandate and give it a budgetary role or the power to override decisions taken by other intergovernmental bodies.

52. The time had come to restate the relationship between the Secretary-General, as chief administrative officer, and the Member States, which must be one of mutual respect based on their respective mandates. It was the role of Member States to determine programmes and appropriate resources, and to ensure that resources were applied to the programmes for which they had been appropriated. Such a role did not represent micromanagement, merely the enforcement of accountability.

53. In the context of restructuring, his delegation expected the Secretary-General to report on a continuing basis on the administrative and financial functioning of the Organization. That would help to put the revised estimates into perspective. General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 46/232 called for consultation between the Secretary-General and Member States, a process that would build confidence in a situation where the impact of redeploying resources was not clear but might well prove negative. His delegation would welcome a revised programme budget which clearly indicated legislative mandates and how activities and outputs would be affected.

54. The Secretary-General had asked for greater flexibility to enable him to adapt staff resources to changing circumstances. His intention seemed to be to redeploy resources between sections. His delegation did not think that there was a need for any greater degree of flexibility under the Financial Rules and Regulations. It could only lead to the marginalization of the Advisory Committee and of the General Assembly. There might also be a danger of programmes being starved of resources through the redeployment of resources to other programmes; that would, in effect, neutralize the intent of the General Assembly with regard to their relative importance.

55. He noted that, while several high-level posts in the economic and social fields had been eliminated, a new post had been created at the Under-Secretary-General level in connection with preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization. His delegation was not clear as to how a post at that level fitted into the staffing table, what the anticipated

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

activities and outputs were, or what changes they might represent in terms of outputs. Furthermore, it was not clear why preparations for the fiftieth anniversary could not be modelled on those for the fortieth anniversary.

56. The Acting Controller had referred to the redeployment of some 30 vacant posts and he noted that the Centre for Human Rights, as a priority area, had been treated generously. His delegation recalled that the critical situation in Africa was also a priority, and wished to know whether consideration was being given to increasing resources accordingly. The publication African Recovery, which had played an important role in mobilizing awareness of the critical economic situation in Africa, had been largely financed from extrabudgetary resources and he wondered whether resources could now be assured.

57. Turning to the medium-term plan, he said he agreed with the view that its format should be simplified so as to make it more useful. The suggestion by CPC regarding the convening of a seminar to consider a prototype of a possible new format was sound. It was important, however, not to sacrifice transparency in the process.

58. The world was characterized by inequalities of wealth and power, which were sometimes reflected in the multilateral institutions established by Member States. The aim of the changes taking place within the Secretariat was the laudable one of promoting efficiency and avoiding duplication, yet institutional change carried with it the risk that the influence of the strong might predominate at the expense of the weak. Priorities could be tilted in favour of a few areas at the cost of other, vitally important, ones. The maintenance of international peace and security was important, but it seemed that equal importance was not being given to the economic and social areas, in which the United Nations could play a major role.

59. Mr. TANG Guangting (China), speaking on agenda item 105, said that the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 was the outcome of arduous efforts. As mandated by the General Assembly, it was the principal policy directive of the Organization, and every effort should be made to maintain its status.

60. While changes in the world situation necessitated revisions to the initial version of the medium-term plan, the basic purpose of such revisions was to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations so that it could better implement the activities mandated by the General Assembly. Accordingly, his delegation concurred in the observation by CPC (A/47/16 (Part II), para. 18) that the concept of sustainable development in the proposed revisions to a number of programmes should be construed as adding a new dimension to their implementation.

61. With regard to the identification of priority programmes in the medium-term plan, revisions to the plan should reflect the concerns of the majority of Member States in the five priority areas: the maintenance of

(Mr. Tang Guangting, China)

international peace and security, the economic development of developing countries, the economic recovery and development of Africa, the environment, and international drug control. In particular, given the increasingly serious economic difficulties of developing countries, revisions to the medium-term plan should focus on priority programmes relating to the economic development of developing countries and to the recovery and development of Africa.

62. His delegation regretted that only a limited number of the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan had been reviewed by intergovernmental bodies. Such reviews should be sought first. Lastly, with regard to the proposed revisions to programme 4 of major programme I, his delegation maintained the reservations it had expressed at the thirty-second session of CPC.

63. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said that the United Nations was at a critical juncture in terms of how the problems relating to its functioning would be addressed. It should be recalled that the essential aim of the restructuring exercise was to improve the effectiveness with which the Organization implemented the mandates established by Member States. The attempt at streamlining, the elimination of levels that complicated the decision-making process, and the quest for greater coherence in implementation were all facets of that approach. The fact that for the time being it was not possible to foretell the exact impact of the restructuring on mandates should not be seen as a cover-up. In an exercise of such magnitude, problems were bound to occur. With the cooperation of Member States, the Secretariat would do its utmost to implement the outputs indicated in the budget for the biennium 1992-1993. The Committee would be kept informed of the impact of the restructuring on programme implementation.

64. With regard to the relationship between the restructuring and the budgetary processes, it should be recalled that the budget was an instrument, and not, in itself, an objective, and that it should serve to facilitate, rather than impede, the reform process. Member States, through the Committee, would be able to monitor the impact of the reforms. There were some difficulties, including the possibility that the budget would always be trying to catch up with the reform process. Apart from the revised estimates now before the Committee, if the Secretary-General's reform proposals necessitated further revised estimates before the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, the Assembly would be so informed, possibly at a resumed session early in 1993. Delegations could thus be assured that any changes necessitated by the reform process would, if not already reflected in the revised estimates now before the Committee, be indicated in additional revised estimates to be submitted to the Assembly. Most of the changes introduced by the Secretary-General would, however, be reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, which would be available to delegations in the spring of 1993.

(Mr. Baudot)

65. With regard to the elimination of high-level posts, the Committee would note that only the General Assembly could establish or abolish posts. In that connection, the revised estimates before the Committee contained certain proposals and any further proposals of that nature would be submitted through the normal channels. A distinction should be drawn between posts and functions and the Secretary-General should be able to employ some of the resources under his management to functions at a level comparable to the high-level posts under consideration by the Committee.

66. On the question of flexibility in the use of human resources, he said that what the Secretary-General sought was a more realistic approach to the current requirement that he should inform either the General Assembly or the Advisory Committee of the temporary transfer of posts from one section of the budget to another. It had quite rightly been pointed out that flexibility could lead to selectivity in the implementation of the mandated programmes. However, such post transfers were used only to fine-tune programme budget implementation in order to ensure the proper implementation of all programmes. Such changes were necessary in part because the techniques used to determine budget allocations were imperfect. Also, from the operational standpoint, the decentralization of decision-making for the various programmes had been allowed to lead to a situation in which it was difficult to get a general overview of the problems of post distribution within the Secretariat.

67. He agreed that there must be a very clear relationship between flexibility and transparency; if the Secretary-General were to be given greater flexibility in the management of posts, it would be necessary to ensure that the General Assembly, ACABQ and CPC were informed of any post movements. Although he did not have anything further to add at present regarding the 74 posts to be redeployed that he had mentioned in his introductory remarks, the General Assembly would be informed of any actual redeployments before the end of the current session.

68. With respect to the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan, he would reply to the specific questions raised when the various sections of the plan were discussed. He observed, however, that the plan was the basic policy document for the preparation of the programme budget and must reflect all mandates in the form of programmes to be incorporated into the programme budget. As for the consultation of Member States, he hoped that, if the programme planning seminar proposed by CPC was approved, an item on the processes needed to improve such consultations would be included in the agenda.

69. In closing, he said that he would answer the many, often very technical, questions which he had left unanswered at the beginning of the informal consultations.

AGENDA ITEM 111: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/47/11)

70. Mr. HASSANOV (Azerbaijan) said that, by distributing the rate calculated for the entire Soviet Union among the republics of the former USSR, the Committee on Contributions had established an excessively high assessment for his country. Its contribution should be established independently of the assessment applied to the former Soviet Union, particularly because that State's contribution did not correspond to the real level of its economic development, reflecting instead its political ambitions as a super-Power. Furthermore, the President of the Russian Federation had affirmed his country's full responsibility for all the rights and obligations of the former USSR under the Charter, including its financial obligations.

71. Another problem lay in the use by the Committee of national income and population statistics for the period 1980-1989 and of the artificially maintained rate of exchange for the Soviet currency during that period. Under a rigidly centralized system of trade between the different republics, his country estimated that some 20 per cent of its national income during the 1980s had been taken out of the Republic without any compensation. Meanwhile, the current severe economic slump would, by preliminary estimates, reduce national income by almost 20 per cent. The situation was complicated by the continuing confrontation with Armenia, which had entailed enormous losses and massive expenditure on refugees. The estimates of the country's per capita income submitted to the Committee were not borne out in studies of its current economic situation carried out by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Yet another constraint lay in the country's shortage of currency reserves and the fact that many of its valuable assets remained frozen in the Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs of the former USSR.

72. His country was not calling for a radical review of the methodology used to calculate the scale of assessments. It was prepared to discharge fully its obligations under the Charter, including its financial obligations. However, it believed that the Committee on Contributions should promptly re-examine the issue of assessments for the republics of the former Soviet Union by taking account of the real exchange rate of the rouble and the actual economic situation of the countries concerned, in coordination with experts from IMF and the World Bank.

73. Mr. CHUINKAM (Cameroon) said that, given the diverse economic circumstances of Member States, the Committee on Contributions would always face an uphill battle in its efforts to arrive at a universally acceptable methodology for the apportionment of the Organization's expenses. His delegation was pleased to note that the Committee had based its work on General Assembly resolution 46/221 and hoped that the Fifth Committee would be able to make an informed decision on the basis of its report (A/47/11).

(Mr. Chuinkam, Cameroon)

74. With respect to the illustrative machine scales appearing in annex III A to the report, his delegation thought that the 10-year base period should be reduced to 5 years. It saw no logic in asking a Member State to pay more than it could pay now on the basis of its theoretical capacity in the future, especially since the economic situation had been deteriorating for the past six years in the developing countries. It was no coincidence that most of the Member States which were currently denied their voting rights under Article 19 of the Charter were developing countries.

75. If applied, the concept of debt-adjusted income would raise the rates of assessment of some indebted developing countries, and, contrary to the assertions of some members of the Committee on Contributions, his delegation doubted that the increase would be compensated by the adjustments mentioned in paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 46/221 B. It agreed, however, with the Committee's comments on the low per capita income allowance formula, in paragraph 8 of its report.

76. His delegation still maintained that there was no viable alternative to the scheme of limits, and it regretted that the Committee had not seen its way to complying with paragraph 3 (f) of resolution 46/221 B, in which it was asked to report on a method for phasing out that scheme which would avoid the allocation of additional points to developing countries. In the circumstances, it concurred with those members of the Committee on Contributions who had recommended phasing out the scheme of limits using ad hoc adjustments.

77. It greatly appreciated the Committee's efforts to identify ways of improving the methodology to be used for future scales. In its view, Member States would be willing to provide data on time regarding dependency on one or a few products, negative net flow of resources and limited capacity to acquire convertible currencies if they knew that such data would be used in the future methodology. It fully associated itself with the members of the Committee who thought that the rates shown in column 4 of annex V most accurately reflected the capacity to pay of Member States. It did not, however, see any need for a review of the principle of capacity to pay by an independent, high-level body.

78. What was at stake was the issue of equity. Any scale that did not reflect the ability to pay would only increase the number of Member States penalized under Article 19 of the Charter.

AGENDA ITEM 112: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/47/140 and Add.1, A/47/168 and Add.1, A/47/415, A/47/508; A/C.5/47/5, A/C.5/47/6, A/C.5/47/9, A/C.5/47/14, A/C.5/47/20; A/C.5/46/2, A/C.5/46/7, A/C.5/46/9, A/C.5/46/13 and A/C.5/46/16)

79. Mr. FAZLE MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that, with the growing demands being made on the United Nations, the efficiency of its staff was of paramount importance. That efficiency would best be achieved by ensuring that the

(Mr. Fazle Mahmood, Pakistan)

recruitment policy complied with the principles laid down in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter. The first step was to offer attractive terms of service to qualified people from different regions. Next, it was necessary to provide for training, career development and mobility, which could help to improve leadership and initiative. Pakistan was concerned to note that only 0.29 per cent of the Secretariat's staff costs were currently devoted to occupational and management training and agreed that the Organization needed to establish a basic staff development policy with a long-term perspective, especially in view of its increased involvement in the areas of peace-keeping and conflict prevention.

80. His delegation shared the concerns expressed by others that less than 10 per cent of all United Nations posts were subject to geographical distribution. The Secretary-General had explained why some categories of staff were excluded from geographical distribution (A/47/416, paras. 11 to 13). However, in view of the international character of the Organization and its increased involvement in peace-keeping, consideration should be given to adding certain Field Service and General Service posts, including posts with special language requirements, to those subject to geographical distribution.

81. The comprehensive report on alternative options for desirable ranges for the geographical distribution of staff in the Professional category and above (A/C.5/46/2) would make it easier to achieve a better balance among the three criteria - membership, contribution and population. In that regard, he agreed with previous speakers that greater weight should be attached to the population factor, and it hoped that the Fifth Committee would give serious consideration to the matter.

82. His delegation noted that the increase in the number of unrepresented countries was mainly due to the admission of several new Member States, and it was glad to see that the number of underrepresented States had declined. Immediate steps should, however, be taken to close the gap between the developed and the developing countries, especially with respect to the representation of women from developing countries. It was encouraging to see that the proportion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution had increased by 1.4 per cent between 30 June 1988 and 30 June 1992, but that trend must be accelerated if the target of 35 per cent was to be reached by 1995.

83. Referring to the statement made by the former Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, he asked how many of the 584 Professional and 1,019 General Service posts assigned to peace-keeping operations had been created since 1 January 1990. He would also like to know the criteria that had been used in recruiting candidates for those posts from outside the Secretariat, including a breakdown of the posts by geographical region. Lastly, he wondered if a list might be made available of the departments from which Professional and General Service staff had been reassigned to peace-keeping missions.

(Mr. Fazle Mahmood, Pakistan)

84. While the aim of the restructuring exercise was to enhance efficiency, it had adversely affected programme delivery, especially in the economic and social fields. The second phase of the restructuring should be directed towards achieving a more logical distribution of the workload and not merely the elimination of posts or the strengthening one area at the expense of another.

85. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that the staffing problems created by the ongoing financial crisis, the restructuring of the Secretariat and the freeze on recruitment had been complicated by the increasing number of peace-keeping operations. With many United Nations officials now reassigned to peace-keeping missions, it was necessary to find competent replacements. His delegation commended the Office of Human Resources Management for its tireless efforts to relieve the concerns of the staff, improve their qualifications through ongoing training and provide better avenues for career development. It also commended the entire staff of the Organization, who continued to work ably and selflessly, sometimes under very difficult conditions.

86. With respect to the composition of the Secretariat, 2,608 posts subject to geographical distribution represented a very small percentage. While there were good reasons for excluding certain categories of posts from geographical distribution, his delegation believed that the number of posts subject to it could be increased within the Secretariat. In addition, United Nations organs with special status in matters of appointment should make an effort to respect the general principle of equitable geographical distribution to the extent possible.

87. There seemed little reason for concern regarding the rapid increase in the number of unrepresented countries, since it could be attributed to the admission of 19 new Member States in the midst of a recruitment freeze, and it was encouraging to note the decline in the number of underrepresented States. However, many countries, including Morocco, had not seen any improvement in their representation in senior-level posts despite the request by the General Assembly in resolution 45/239. Efforts to correct that situation were all the more imperative since, according to document A/47/416, table C, there had actually been a slight decline in the representation of developing countries, especially in the upper echelons. Furthermore, it was important to respect the principle that no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State. Lastly, he hoped that the Secretariat would continue its efforts to ensure the representation of the various legal systems in its legal departments, in accordance with resolution 45/239.

88. Noting the progress made in increasing the representation of women in the Secretariat, he urged the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts to achieve the targets set by the General Assembly by 1995.

89. With regard to the system of desirable ranges, his country continued to believe that there should be a better way of ensuring the equitable

(Mr. Zahid, Morocco)

geographical representation of Member States. In seeking new methodologies, there was no need to retain the three factors - membership, contribution and population - on which the current system was based. The weight given to the contribution factor placed developing countries at a disadvantage, while that given to the population factor decreased the representation of small countries. Morocco agreed, however, with the Secretary-General that one of the problems of the present system lay in achieving the proper balance among those factors; any change in their weighting would be certain to make the representation of Member States more equitable.

90. It was very important for United Nations staff to be highly motivated, which was why the Organization needed to provide both favourable conditions of service and satisfactory avenues for career advancement. His delegation agreed with the view expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 5 of his report on career development (A/C.5/47/6), that the critical components of a career development system included such elements as human resources planning, staff training and development, staff mobility and promotion. Training was especially important, since both mobility and, to some extent, promotion depended on it. It also allowed employees to keep up to date and to adapt to changing job requirements. His delegation therefore welcomed the various training programmes planned by the Office of Human Resources Management. While the training programme as a whole might be costly, it was a necessary investment if the United Nations was to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century successfully.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.